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The President's Daily Brief

28 April 1969
(Afternoon)

19

~~*Top Secret*~~ 50X1

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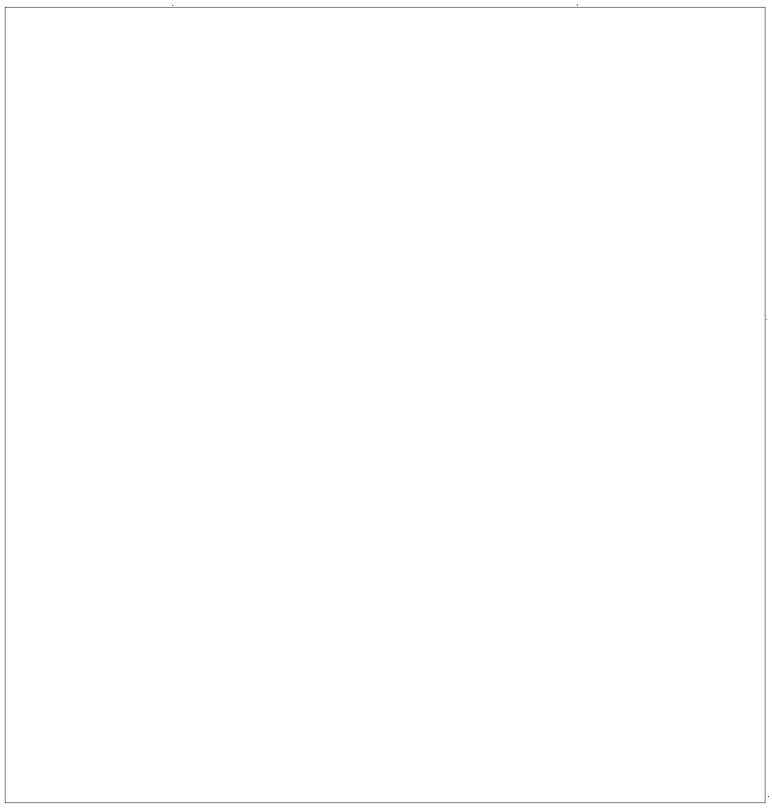

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

29 April 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF 28 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

EUROPE

Pompidou announced his candidacy this morning. (FBIS 12, 29 Apr)

MIDDLE EAST

Israeli aircraft this morning attacked Jordanian and terrorist positions south of Lake Tiberias, according to an Israeli announcement. 50X1

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The crisis in Lebanon continues unabated. The embassy in Beirut reports that:

--Former Premier Karami is willing to try again, but only if he can achieve some kind of national consensus on the terrorists. If Karami cannot put together another government, President Hilu's only alternative is to call in the army.

--The army seems to be backing away from its determination to rein in the fedayeen.

--The Fatah terrorist organization seems willing to explore the possibility of a modus vivendi with the Lebanese, but a rival, Syrian-supported organization remains intransigent. The Lebanese suspect that even Fatah's apparent reasonableness is only tactical and temporary.

--The fedayeen in Lebanon now number 1,200-1,500.

Israeli officials yesterday told an embassy officer that the crisis had been triggered by the efforts of "leftists," with Syrian backing, to destroy the Lebanese political system. They expressed concern that the crisis could spread to Jordan

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if Lebanon does not hold the line. [redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

* * *

There is nothing significant to report on Vietnam or Soviet Affairs.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

BOLIVIA

[redacted]

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I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

EUROPE

So far, only Francois Mitterand has thrown his hat into the French presidential ring. Pompidou is still silent, and Giscard d'Estaing stopped short of declaring at his press conference. Giscard did say, however, that he would not support anyone who had been involved in the political battles of the past year, which we take to mean that he will not back Pompidou. Despite many rumors to the contrary in Paris, we tend to doubt that De Gaulle intends to run again.

Interim President Poher in his initial address called for unity but neither announced his own candidacy nor set a date for the election. We will report any further developments in tomorrow morning's late notes.

* * *

The West German cabinet last week once again postponed a decision on the nonproliferation treaty, and the treaty's opponents are saying openly that there is now no chance of a German signature before next fall's elections. Foreign Minister Brandt apparently has realized that both his party's vote totals and the treaty's prospects could be damaged if the treaty (which is none too popular in West Germany) becomes a major campaign issue. He therefore has recently been pushing less strenuously for early signature.

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VIETNAM

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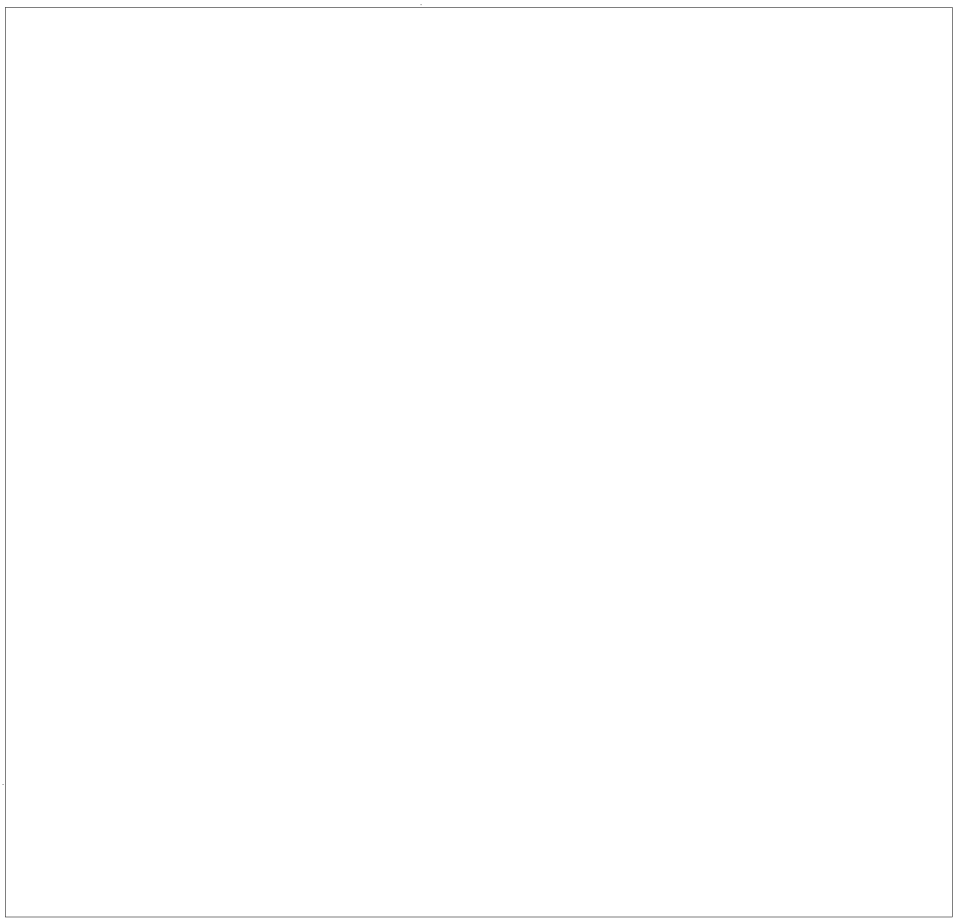

MIDDLE EAST

The Israeli press is exultant over De Gaulle's resignation. [redacted] Israeli officials [redacted] 50X1

[redacted] satisfaction is obvious. They do not expect a 50X1
sharp change in French policy, but they clearly anticipate that Israel will get a fuller hearing in Paris now.

Their optimism seems justified. The French Government probably will not make any major policy changes until after

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the elections, but none of De Gaulle's potential successors is likely to be as rigid toward the Israelis as the General was. [redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

[redacted] 50X1

* * *

The Arabs and Israelis meanwhile continued to exchange fire on all fronts.

Soviet Affairs

There is nothing significant to report.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

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PAKISTAN

[redacted]

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COMMUNIST CHINA

The composition of the 25-member politburo announced today fails to reveal a decisive victory for any of the competing interest groups in Peking. The listing of the members in the Chinese version of alphabetical order successfully conceals their relative ranking, but the body appears to be essentially a compromise product balancing divergent political interests. Most of Mao's more radical supporters who played major roles in the Cultural Revolution are members. Their presence, however, is offset by an infusion of military men, some of whom were severely criticized early in the Cultural Revolution. This attests both to an attempt to legitimize the army's role in the party and to its importance in running the state. A major surprise in the new ruling body is the absence of virtually all of the central government ministers who served in the previous politburo; this may suggest some diminution of Premier Chou En-lai's political strength.

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Lin Piao's "political report" also suggests that the congress failed to achieve a consensus on several difficult problems which have plagued the leadership in recent months. Lin adopted a vague and rhetorical approach to the problems China faces in the post-congress period and avoided delineating specific programs. The prime policy issues discussed in detail were the vexed question of how to deal with officials criticized during the Cultural Revolution and the need for careful economic planning and renewed attention to increasing production. He prescribed the "rehabilitation" of large numbers of cadres, suggesting that a considerable number of middle and lower level government and party officials will be restored to duty.

The report touched relatively little on foreign policy. Most of Lin's remarks were given over to generalized denunciations of the United States and the Soviet Union. In this context, Lin continued to maintain Peking's general silence on the war in Vietnam, which was barely mentioned in passing.

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